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Item 4(b) of the provisional agenda

Implementation of the recommendations arising from the in-depth evaluation of the Empretec Programme

Progress report by the UNCTAD secretariat

Executive Summary

The implementation of the recommendations was regarded as an opportunity to consolidate and update the programme both at headquarters and in the field. Most of the recommendations have already been implemented. Limited financial resources were a key factor in determining the gradual implementation of the recommendations. Most of the resources used came from savings and from the regular budget. However, the availability of extrabudgetary resources is of vital importance, considering that some planned activities cannot be completed unless external sources of funding are identified. The Programming, Planning and Assessment Unit of UNCTAD facilitated the identification of existing in-house technical solutions and encouraged cooperation among Divisions within UNCTAD. All National Empretec centres have offered valuable support to the process. The remaining recommendations could be implemented in the next year, provided the necessary extrabudgetary resources are available.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In accordance with the existing procedures, the Working Party decided to review at its thirty-eighth session in September 2001 the implementation of the recommendations arising from the in-depth evaluation of the Empretec Programme. The present report responds to this request. In its section II, the progress report indicates activities undertaken in the last 12 months as follow-up actions to the evaluation of the Programme. In section III, the document describes the remaining action to be undertaken for the full implementation of the recommendations arising from the in-depth study. The progress report provides other information with respect to the approach adopted by the secretariat in the implementation of the recommendations and the logic of such an approach, as well as with respect to factors that affected or may affect in the future the implementation of the recommendations contained in the evaluation report.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Implementation plan

2. The 11 recommendations (A-K) contained in the evaluation report of the Empretec Programme (TD/B/WP/129) were grouped into four blocks as follows:

Block 1	**Data collection, monitoring and evaluation tools**
Rec. H	"UNCTAD/Empretec should make available to national programmes a unified software solution to Management Information System (MIS) needs that are not yet met".
Rec. C	"With the assistance of national programmes, UNCTAD/Empretec should produce an inventory of all existing technical seminars".
Block 2	**International networking**
Rec. I	"UNCTAD/Empretec should set up and manage a web site open to all the international community".
Rec. K	"Organization by UNCTAD/Empretec of a yearly meeting of Empretec national directors".
Block 3	**Product development**
Rec. J	"Organization by UNCTAD/Empretec of yearly meeting of trainers"
Rec. A	"UNCTAD/Empretec should undertake a systematic review of EDP (core seminars)".

Rec. B	"UNCTAD/Empretec should make sure that the experience gained in EDP in the public sector is transferred to all interested national programmes".
Rec. D	"UNCTAD/Empretec should develop a standard Business Planning training package".
Block 4	**Training of trainers and certification**
Rec. E	"UNCTAD/Empretec should urgently address the need to train new trainers and retrain older ones".
Rec. F	"UNCTAD/Empretec should devise a compulsory system of certification for all trainers".
Rec. G	"UNCTAD/Empretec should introduce a certification process for Empretecos".

3. For each recommendation, a set of activities was planned, indicating in each case the person responsible, starting date and duration (annex).

4. In implementing these recommendations, the following elements were taken into account:

- Priority was given, in accordance with the decision of the Working Party, to the consolidation of the Programme before expanding its geographical coverage;

- Most activities were/are being carried out by staff from the Empretec Programme. In some cases, special expertise was required on issues related to training methodologies, business planning and data management systems, and consultants were hired.

- Following the suggestions from the Programming, Planning and Assessment Unit, full utilization was made of the existing in-house tools and technical solutions. This allowed resources and time to be saved.

- Limitations in resources from both regular and extrabudgetary funds led to the designation of priorities. Over the last year, only funds from the regular budget were available. Financial provisions were included in the proposed programme budget for 2002-2003 in order to complete the implementation of the recommendations.

- The work plan took into account the suggestions made by Empretec directors and trainers.

B. Status of implementation

5. On the basis of the implementation plan, the following actions have taken place:

Block 1: Data collection, monitoring and evaluation tools (H & C)

Rec. H	a) Agreement with the Division for Services Infrastructure for Development and Trade Efficiency (SITE) to use the GTP Net system; b) IT expert hired on 6 March 2001; c) Formal request for reclassification of the IT post sent on 12 December 2001; d) Features of an international database and of a common performance indicators system identified for all the country programmes; e) Empretec MIS designed by the IT expert;
Rec. C	a) Basic data collection exercise started with secretarial support

6. The development of the Empretec International Management Information System (MIS) took advantage to the maximum possible extent of UNCTAD's internal capacity and know-how. In this respect, it was decided to draw on the system already developed for the Global Trade Point Network (GTP Net). Thanks to the cooperation of SITE, this operation has been carried out successfully, and time and resources were saved in conceptualizing the system, avoiding expenses related to the development of a prototype and reaching visible results in a relatively short time. An IT expert was hired to undertake Empretec-specific adjustments. The system is now fully developed, and will be available on the Empretec web site (www.empretec.org) starting from 1 September 2001.

7. The Global Empretec Network consists of four main sections, devoted to the Empretec Programme, Empretec Centres, Empretec Trainers and Empretec Companies.

8. The first section concerning the Empretec Programme consists of a non-interactive comprehensive website, where a general description of the Empretec Programme can be found. Detailed information is provided on the concept and design of the programme, its target beneficiaries, origins, geographical coverage, global outreach, training methodology, specialized modules, yearly activities, strategic partners, regional projects and contacts in UNCTAD.

9. The remaining three parts are all interactive. Data on the Empretec centres, trainers and companies are collected according to the access rights given to the users (these can be simply anonymous, or can be recognized as Empretec companies, trainers, directors or staff based in Geneva).

10. Authorized users can load data in Geneva or directly in the field, thereby assuring continuous and first-hand updating of the system. At the end of each section, a specific space for news, search functions, documents and contacts can be found.

11. The section covering Empretec centres includes the following:

- Generally accessible information: a list and description of all Empretec Centres, grouped according to their geographic location; individual mini web sites for each one of them, including logo, contacts and institutional profiles, list of services provided, staff and companies assisted; information regarding ongoing activities.

- Restricted information: basic performance indicators, divided in three sub-groups (the outreach of the centre, its financial viability and the impact achieved on the entrepreneurs trained), as well as a discussion forum for Empretec directors.

12. The module on Empretec trainers incorporates:

- Generally accessible information: a list of certified Empretec trainers available by name, country, seniority and language skills; instructions on how to become certified trainers; training of trainers events; job opportunities and trainers needed in new programmes in course of installation.

- Restricted information: detailed data on the trainers; training material and manuals, and a discussion forum for Empretec trainers.

13. The section on Empretec companies include:

- Generally accessible information: a list and profile of Empretec companies; specific data on the sector (be it manufacturing or services) and products classified according the international codification system adopted by the GTP Net; a search function on companies by country, name, city, sector and product.

- Restricted information: electronic trading opportunities, where new offers and requests can be posted; an archive of all the posted announcements; a research function by date, country, target market.

14. In order for the system to be fully operational, an extensive data collection exercise is needed. An operational plan has been prepared for this purpose. In the next year, an IT person should be given a full time assignment to implement the MIS, continuously upgrade it and provide ongoing technical assistance to national users in the field.

15. UNCTAD will provide the existing national Empretec programmes with technical advice on how to use the platform of the global Empretec network (Lotus Domino) and to further develop the information systems at the local level, so as to build the national centre database needed for internal management and strengthening of their programmes.

Block 2 - International networking

Rec. I	a) Web site designed and accessible to the public
Rec. K	b) Ad hoc consultations of Empretec directors planned in Geneva, 19-21 December 2001 (availability of funds still pending)

16. The first section of the Empretec MIS is meant to be the official Empretec web site. Related details have been mentioned in the paragraphs above.

17. The holding of the International Empretec Meeting this year in Geneva is a key component of the Empretec strategy. The meeting is tentatively scheduled for 19-21 December, even though available financing does not permit the attendance of a sufficient number of representatives from each of the regions covered by the Empretec programme (Africa, Latin America, Mediterranean Basin, Eastern Europe).

18. The strategic importance of the meeting is based on the following considerations:

- direct interaction and exchange of experience among old and newly established programmes;
- consolidation of the actions undertaken by UNCTAD in order to consolidate and strengthen the programme;
- committing the directors to adopt the updated methodology and use the international MIS during their daily operations;
- direct feedback from directors and technical experts, and immediate integration of the appropriate changes.

Block 3 – Product development

Rec. J	a) No funds available
Rec. A	a) Technical Expert Committee (TEC) established and individual experts hired b) Common work-plan discussed and agreed by the TEC and UNCTAD c) Empretec basic training methodology fully revised and updated

Rec. B	a) "Iniciativa" methodology translated from Spanish into English b) Pilot experience started in Zimbabwe
Rec. D	a) Experts identified and hired b) Business planning package developed

19. The basic Empretec training methodology (EDP workshop) has been fully updated. Twenty-five modules have been fully revised and updated, while four other modules, plus Business Planning, have been completely redone.

20. A standard in-depth impact assessment methodology has been elaborated, and questionnaires in English, Spanish and French have been prepared accordingly. New country programmes will budget costs for impact assessment, but funds are necessary for pilot case studies in countries where programmes have already been established.

21. Training manuals (for participants and for trainers) have been prepared and are now available on the web. However, due to budgetary constraints, translations in all the required languages are not ready yet. A strategic agreement has been reached with the regional Enterprise Africa programme to share the costs of translations, promote the exchange of experiences among African and Latin American lead trainers, and organize joint initiatives and training of trainers activities.

22. In order to diversify and customize the traditional Empretec training services, the Agrotech training module has been finalized. This integrates "agri-business" components and training modules into the basic Empretec training course.

23. Fair Trade Assistance, from the Netherlands, was the main provider for "agri-business" inputs, together with its UK-based partner Tradecraft Exchange. Corporacion Innovar, the Empretec counterpart institution in Colombia, was responsible for the adaptation of the methodology and the integration of the additional components. Funds are sought now for the dissemination of the methodology, and a joint UNCTAD/Fair Trade fund-raising initiative is foreseen in the near future.

Block 4 - Training of Trainers and Certifications

Rec. E	a) No funds available
Rec. F	a) Trainers certification methodology established b) Training of trainers manual updated
Rec. G	a) Registration of companies through the MIS

24. Lack of financial resources did not allow initiatives in the area of retraining of trainers. However, there is a definate need to train new trainers and retrain old ones, and this should be addressed as soon as possible, particularly if the new workshop methodology is to be used effectively.

25. The trainers certification methodology has been standardized and it should be diffused among already established programmes, in addition to the new programmes. Manuals have been prepared and (partially) translated.

26 As to the registration/certification of Empretec companies through the MIS, established programmes will need technical assistance and some resources to transfer their existing database to the new MIS. Related costs have already been budgeted in Block 1 – Rec.H.

III. PHASE II OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

27. The following activities are still to be implemented. The resources required are indicated below. The timeframe for the implementation of phase II is September 2001-September 2002.

Block 1	**Data collection, monitoring and evaluation tools** (H & C)	**Costs involved (US$)**
Rec. H	- Data collection from all the Empretec country programmes	20,000 [a]
	- Data analysis (assessment of impact and establishment of benchmarks)	30,000 [b]
	- IT technical assistance to the programmes for further developing a local internal MIS (national centre database) using the Domino platform	50,000 [c]
	- Specialized advisory resources to the programmes on how to improve their business strategy and their financial viability (according to the agreement established with BESO) *	100,000[d] (cost sharing basis)
		200,000 TOTAL
Rec. C	- Data collection exercise to be continued (through secretarial support)	

a: US$ 20,000 for data collection includes travel and technical solutions for transfer of data.

b: US$ 30,000 for data analysis and impact assessment includes six pilot studies and related benchmarks.

c: US$ 50,000 for IT technical assistance for developing local MIS and mini web sites using Lotus Notes – this includes US$ 5,000 for 10 countries to hire a local expert assisted by Empretec/Geneva.

d: US$ 100,000 for advisory services from BESO includes US$ 25,000 for four countries/regions on a cost sharing basis.

(*) Cooperation has been agreed between BESO (British Executive Service Overseas) and UNCTAD in order to assist Empretec organizations to diversify their services, to become more cost-effective and sustainable, and to develop business associations. BESO assistance would consist of a three-year module that can be implemented by new Empretec programmes and possibly by some of the existing ones. This draws on the lessons that can be learned from the capacity building work and entrepreneur associations streamlining that were part of the BESO (GEDEPRO) support to the Empretec Ghana Foundation. Options include 2-3 year modules costing $20-30,000 per country and/or region in total.

Block 2	**International networking**	**Costs involved**
Rec. I	- Continous updating and maintenance of the web-site - IT technical assistance to the programmes for the development of national mini-websites	Availability of an IT expert
Rec. K	- Organization of regional and international meetings	To be decided according to the location and extent of participation

Block 3	**Product development**	**Costs involved**
Rec. J	- Organization of a Training of Trainers Meeting in conjunction with the International Directors Meeting in 2002	US$ 60,000 on a cost-sharing basis (50% UNCTAD)
Rec. A	- Exchange of experiences and of training methodologies among African and Latin American trainers - Completion of translation	Through the yearly meeting US$5,000
Rec. B	- Promotion and diffusion of "Iniciativa" to new countries	Variable costs subject to number and situation of countries involved
Rec. D	- Completion of translation	US$5,000

Block 4	Training of Trainers and Certifications	Costs involved
Rec. E	- Organize training of trainers workshops in order to train new trainers and retrain old ones on a regional basis	Variable costs subject to number and situation of countries involved
Rec. F	- Diffuse information on the certification system; - Quality control for all the established programmes	Variable costs subject to number and situation of countries involved
Rec. G	- Assist country programmes in the registration process of already trained entrepreneurs	Variable costs subject to number and situation of countries involved

Total cost

The total cost of pending activities for UNCTAD/Empretec/Geneva is US$ 240,000.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

28. Over the last year, all possible efforts have been made to address the problems identified by the external evaluators. The implementation of the recommendations was regarded as an opportunity to consolidate and update the programme both at headquarters and in the field. To the extent possible, recommendations have been implemented by regular staff.

29. Limited financial resources were the key factor in determining the gradual implementation of the recommendations. Efforts have been made to get extrabudgetary funds. Most of the resources used came from savings and from the regular budget. However, the availability of extra-budgetary resources is of vital importance, considering that some planned activities cannot be completed unless external sources of funding are identified. These activities are largely concentrated on capacity-building for trainers and directors to take over the new information and performance measurement system. All remaining recommendations could be implemented in the next year, provided the necessary extrabudgetary resources are available.

30. The Programming, Planning and Assessment Unit of UNCTAD facilitated the identification of existing technical solutions and encouraged cooperation among Divisions within UNCTAD. All the National Empretec centres have offered valuable support for the process, in some cases by funding the costs of specific activities (e.g. Empretec Programmes of Brazil, Uruguay, Zimbabwe and the regional Enterprise Africa Programme), in other cases by providing the human resources needed to establish the Technical Expert Committees. Finally, appreciation should be expressed to many senior Empretec advisors who have offered their contribution on a voluntary basis.

ANNEX October 2000

EMPRETEC

Implementation plan for the recommendations agreed by the Working Party (15 September 2000)

Summary table

Recommendations	Implementation plan	Responsible	Months
1. Data collection, monitoring and evaluation tools			
H. *"UNCTAD/Empretec should make available to national programmes a unified software solution to Management Information System (MIS) needs that are not yet met".*	1.1 Creation and maintainence of an international Empretec Website, where a relational database will be linked for the implementation of a common performance indicator system.	Coordinator "A" (present staff) & IT expert (new staff)	1/2/3/4
	1.2 Indentification of what variables are to be collected electronically, and design of software for an Empretec Management Information System (MIS)	Coordinator "A" & IT expert	3/4/5/6
	1.3 Installation of MIS in Geneva and the national offices	Coordinator "A" & IT expert	7/8/9/10
	1.4 Adoption of international benchmarking and monitoring tools, through analysis of data on continuous basis, and feedback to country programmes	Ad hoc consultancy by an external auditor & IT expert	12 to 24
C. *"With the assistance of national programmes, UNCTAD/Empretec should produce an inventory of all existing technical seminars".*	1.5 Proceed with systematic data collection, including all existing Empretec technical services	IT expert	3 onwards

Recommendations	Implementation plan	Responsible	Months
2. International Networking			
I. *"UNCTAD/Empretec should set up and manage a web site open to all the international community".*	2.1 Design/adapt an accessible web site (see item 1.1 of implementation box), for business opportunities and for general and specific information on Empretec services and activities.	Coordinator "A" (present staff) & IT expert (new staff)	1/2/3/4
K. *"Organization by UNCTAD/Empretec of a yearly meeting of Emprectec national directors".*	2.2 Encourage the institutionalisation of the international director's annual meeting. Coordination with country programmes on the agenda and on cost-sharing of the meetings.	Present staff	10 & 22

Recommendations	Implementation plan	Responsible	Months
3. Product development			
J. "Organization by UNCTAD/Empretec of yearly meeting of trainers"	3.1 Constitution of the Training Expert Committee (TEC)	Coordinator "B" (present staff)	1 onwards
	3.2 The TEC should have a annual meeting	Coordinator "B" &TEC	11/23
***A.** "UNCTAD/Empretec should undertake a systematic review of EDP (core seminars)".*	3.3 Updating of EDP Workshop	Coordinator "B" &TEC	1/2/3/4/5/6
***B.** "UNCTAD/Empretec should make sure that the experience gained in EDP in the public sector is transferred to all interested national programmes".*	3.4 "Inicative Programme": adapation to a global product	Coordinator "B" &TEC	6/7/8/9/10
***D.** "UNCTAD/Empretec should develop a standard Business Planning training package".*	3.5 Development of a Business Planning package	Coordinator "B" &TEC	1/2/3

Recommendations	Implementation plan	Responsible	Months
4. Training of trainers and certification			
E. *"UNCTAD/Empretec should urgently address the need to train new trainers and retrain older ones".*	4.1 Capacitation on development of training material and on skills to design new products/services	Coordinator "B" &TEC	1 onwards
	4.2 Organisation of yearly workshop for training trainers	Coordinator "B" &TEC	11/17
	4.3 UNCTAD/Empretec: continuous follow-up and auditing on the issue country by country	Coordinator "B" & other present staff	1 onwards
F. *"UNCTAD/Empretec should devise a compulsory system of certification for all trainers".*	4.4 Design of a "manual of procedures" on certification, trainers' levels, quality control, etc.	Coordinator "B" & TEC	1/2/3
	4.5 Implementation of the procedures	Coordinator "B" & National Directors	4 onwards
G. *"UNCTAD/Empretec should introduce a certification process for Empretecos".*	4.6 Dissemination of the certification process among country programmes	Coordinator "B" & National Directors	1 onwards
	4.7 UNCTAD/Empretec: application of systematic auditing	Coordinator "B"	6 onwards